

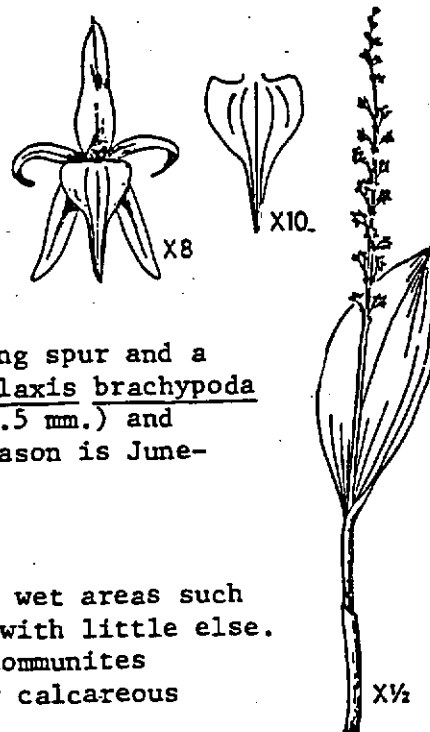
MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

WHITE ADDER'S-MOUTH

(Malaxis brachypoda (Gray) Fern.)

DESCRIPTION

A slender herb, Malaxis brachypoda hardly appears to be a member of the Orchid family but close inspection of the tiny flowers reveals its kinship. This plant arises from solid tubers and has a stem height of 4-10 inches (1-2.5 dm.). A solitary, erect, basal leaf is oval to elliptic in shape, less than an inch to 3 1/2 inches (1.7-9 cm.) long and at least half as wide. Greenish-white flowers are produced along the upper part of the stem, each with a slender tapering spur and a heart-shaped lip situated lowermost in the flower. Malaxis brachypoda has ovate sepals which are less than an inch long (2-2.5 mm.) and lateral petals that spread horizontally. Flowering season is June-August.



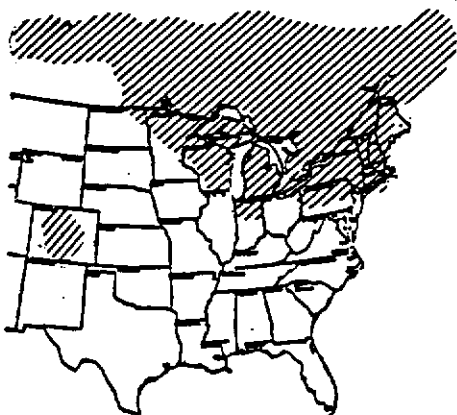
HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

In Massachusetts, White Adder's-mouth occurs in shady, wet areas such as swamps and bogs, usually growing in sphagnum moss, with little else. It also favors coniferous forested fens and peatland communities dominated by coniferous trees and influenced by highly calcareous water.

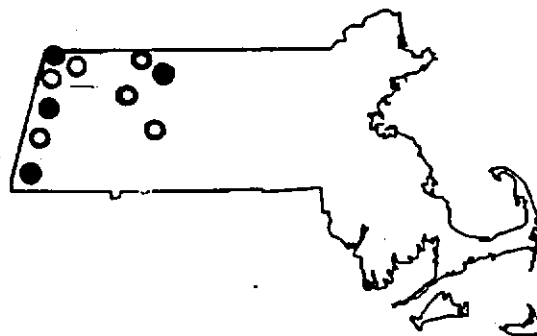
RANGE

Labrador to Alaska, south to Pennsylvania, northern Indiana, Minnesota, Alberta and British Columbia. Disjunct populations are located in the mountains of Colorado and southern California.

Gleason, H.A. The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern U.S. and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, 1952.



Distribution of White Adder's-mouth



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

WHITE ADDER'S-MOUTH (continued)

POPULATION STATUS

Malaxis brachypoda is considered a "Threatened" species in Massachusetts. Currently (1978 to present) six occurrences have been sited and prior to 1978, seven historical occurrences have been recorded. The reasons for the rarity of this plant in Massachusetts include its natural occurrence in low numbers at a site and the possibility of it being overlooked in the limited amount of suitable habitat in the state.